

In so far as the Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment is concerned, a composite proposal on surface water based water supply schemes for arsenic affected urban and rural areas in South 24 Parganas District was received at an estimated cost of Rs. 260.12 crores in April, 97. The same has been technically examined and the State Govt. has been requested to submit modified proposal.

(c) & (d) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has stated that the studies conducted by All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta have shown that out of all the people using water with arsenic at various levels, about 14% were suffering from Arsenicosis which include Keratosis, rain drop pigmentation, Hepatomegaly (Enlarged Liver) and Bronchitis.

It may, however, also be noted that these diseases were also observed among the non-affected control group and is therefore less specific for diagnosis of chronic Arsenicosis.

[Translation]

Staff Selection Examinations

4977. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any complaints regarding publication of dummy question papers by unauthorised elements for the various Staff Selection Examinations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) No, Sir,

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of position stated at (a) above.

[English]

Haj Pilgrims

4978. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of Haj Pilgrims from Karnataka visiting Jeddah every year;

(b) whether there is any branch of the Haj Committee in Bangalore; and

(c) if not, will the Government take steps to establish the same in Bangalore to help the Haj pilgrims?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) The number of Haj pilgrims from Karnataka visiting Jeddah under the arrangements made by the Central Haj Committee for Haj 97 was 2812. Information regarding the number of pilgrims from Karnataka who perform Haj individually or in groups through private tour operators is not available.

(b) and (c) Central Haj Committee has no branch in any part of the country. However, in the States there are State Haj Committees to assist and look after the Haj pilgrims belonging to the respective states. Karnataka also has a State Haj Committee located in Bangalore to help the state Haj pilgrims.

Killing of Militants

4979. SHRI V. PRADEEP DEV : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of militants including foreign militants killed in Kashmir during encounter with Security Forces since the installation of the popular Government upto March 31, 1997;

(b) the casualty suffered by the Security Forces during this period;

(c) whether there is improvement in the Security scenario after the installation of popular Government in the State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) and (b) According to the information made available by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, 457 militants including 35 foreign national/mercenaries, and 97 Security Forces personnel, were killed in Jammu & Kashmir during the period 1.10.1996 to 31.3.1997.

(c) and (d) There has been definite improvement in the overall situation in Jammu & Kashmir after the popular Government took over in the State. The sustained operations of the police and security forces which have led to significant successes in the recent months, the increased flow of information, the overall change in the mood of the people, and open condemnation by them of the militant activities, have brought the militants under substantially increased pressure and helped to isolate them and further contain their activities, notwithstanding the desperate actions against soft targets that have occurred from time to time. All efforts are being made by Government and security forces to ensure that complete peace and normalcy be restored at the earliest.

Declaration of Tribal Area

4980. SHRI GULAM MOHD. MIR MAGANI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal for declaring hilly areas of Jammu and Kashmir as Tribal areas; and

(b) if so, the areas proposed to be notified for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.